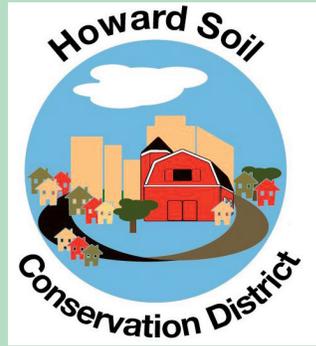


Howard Soil
Conservation District
14735 Frederick Road
Cooksville, MD 21723
410.313.0680
www.howardscd.org

Conservation Matters



March 2022

CALENDAR

HSCD Office Holiday Closures:

April 15 Good Friday

May 30 Memorial Day

June 20 Juneteenth

Cover Crop Dates:

March 1: First day to terminate cover crop

May 1: Acres receiving delayed termination incentive can be terminated

See Page 7 for Additional Important Dates and Information

March 15: Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

April 9: Howard County GreenFest (Come visit us)

April 22: Earth Day

April 27: Howard County Envirothon

June 22: Maryland Envirothon

Howard County Fall Farm and Conservation Tour

The Fall Farm and Conservation Tour provides an opportunity to get elected officials onto some farms in Howard County to help expand their understanding about the challenges and opportunities farmers experience. The Farm Tour is organized by Howard SCD, Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Howard County Farm Bureau. The goal of the Farm Tour is to give policy makers a chance to meet with farmers and discuss important facets of their operations in a hands-on environment. Elected officials that attend the event are often amazed by the complexity and diversity of the agricultural operations in Howard County. They also get a chance to see many conservation practices that farmers implement to protect local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

It was clear that our Howard County elected officials care about the agricultural community and are interested in learning about the challenges that farmers face. Four out of the five Councilmembers attended the Fall Farm and Conservation Tour, with Councilmembers Jung, Rigby, and Yungmann participating in the entire tour. Also in attendance were members or staff of the Howard County Delegation to the General Assembly. Senator Guy Guzzone and Senator Katie Fry Hester also joined the group for portions of the tour.

Lydia Liker feed several hundred families in Howard County and the surrounding region through their CSA. During the tour, David reviewed some of his farming techniques and how he incorporates conservation into his operation. He discussed the challenges that farmers face in finding, affording, and keeping labor to help plant, grow, and harvest crops. Access to reliable labor is an issue that plagues most agricultural operations.



Abby Gibbon, Fine Idea Farm, receiving her Cooperator of the Year Award.

The next stop on the tour was Fine Idea Farm, an equestrian training and boarding operation, owned and operated by Abby Gibbon. In addition to being a new Associate Supervisor on the Howard SCD Board of Supervisors, Abby is also a recipient of the District's 2021 Cooperator of the Year Award. Abby went over the details of her operation with tour participants, and explained the equestrian

eventing and competition aspects of the horse industry. She also shared a compelling story about her first experience with the Howard SCD. She was struggling with a wet, mucky section of her farm that was a critical access point to her pastures. She shared her challenges on Facebook, and the District's Equine Conservation Planner, Kristen Parris, offered assistance. With technical assistance from Howard SCD and financial support from the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Ab-

(continued on page 2)



Attendees starting off their day with a beautiful view and weather at Gorman Farms.

This year's Farm and Conservation Tour took place in mid-October, and started at Gorman Farms. Gorman Farms is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation that employs principles of organic farming in their operation. Owners David and



Learning about boarding operation at Fine Idea Farm, attendees tour the barn.

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Howard County Fall Farm and Conservation Tour (continued)

(continued from page 1)

by was able to turn the mess into a functional, reinforced trail and walkway system that saved her time, money, and hassle.

For lunch the group was hosted at Brendel Farms, a traditional grain and beef operation. During lunch the elected officials watched a presentation about RoundUp by Dr. Donna Farmer, a nationally recognized toxicologist. Dr. Farmer described the importance of the herbicide for a variety of agricultural practices and the scientific research and federal and international scrutiny the chemical has been subject to throughout the decades.



Justin Brendel, farmer and HSCD Board of Supervisor Chair, and Doug Tregoning, retired University of Maryland Extension Agent educate attendees concerning farm management, soil health, cost of inputs needed to grow crops, marketing and the importance of no-till farming.

The visit to Brendel's farm also included presentations by Justin Brendel and former University of Maryland Extension Agent Doug Tregoning. Justin, who is also the Chair of the Howard SCD Board of Supervisors, reviewed his farming operations with participants, including soil health, the use of cover crops, and some of the costs associated with the machinery and inputs (fuel, seed, fertilizer, etc.) it takes to grow crops. Mr. Tregoning provided insight on the benefits of no-till farming and the importance of grain storage and marketing to protect farmers' bottom line.

The final stop of the day was to Greenway Farms, a choose and cut Christmas Tree operation owned by David Healey

and his sons Michael and Tim. In addition to the Christmas Trees, Greenway Farms also grows and sells poinsettia plants around the holidays and a variety of bedding plants and vegetables in the spring time. The Healey's emphasized how important the funding they have received from the County has been for the expansion and efficiency of their family farm. They have received several Agricultural Innovation Grants from the Howard County Economic Development Authority.



Mr. David Healey shares the history of their family farm, how their operation has changed, with the tour participants.

The Fall Farm and Conservation Tour was a great opportunity to connect elected officials with their local farmers and to help our representatives understand how the policies they legislate can have a profound impact on family farms in Howard County.



Attendees ended the day at Greenway Farms. Thank you to all who attended as well as to those families and individuals who welcomed us onto their farms.

Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), University of Maryland Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will sponsor the annual Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting on Tuesday, March 15th, 6:15 PM - 9:00 PM. Registration and a light meal will be at 6:15 PM, with the meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. Topics include Soil Health, Natural Pesticide Alternatives, Soybean Population Research, and a Nutrient Management Update.

This year's meeting will be held in-person at the Howard County Fairgrounds Dining Hall as well as have a virtual option for attending. There is no cost but attendees should pre-register by Friday, 3/11/22. A link, for those attending virtually, will be sent the morning of the meeting. If you are unable to attend please pre-register and you will receive a link to the recording. Call the Howard Soil Conservation District, 410.313.0680, or email kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov, to pre-register or with any questions.

Saying Good-Bye and Good Luck

Charlotte Brewster has left her position as NRCS District Conservationist for Howard and Montgomery Counties, and has moved on to a new position as Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program Manager, Conservation Technical Assistance Division.

In this position Charlotte will provide expert technical advice and guidance to NRCS nationwide, academia and other external interested groups on the direction and operation of the intricacies of the TSP certification program development, implementation and management. Charlotte will be conduct-

ing in-depth analysis and evaluations of applicants applying for an NRCS TSP certification, continue developing the TSP program, its business tools, monitor certification requirements and develop new methods for addressing controversial problems.

Charlotte's last day in the office was Friday, February 25th. While we are excited for Charlotte she will be missed, as will her dedication to farmers and her tireless efforts to guarantee federal funding for as many farmers as possible. We wish Charlotte all the best in her new role.

*"The soil is a medium for living things and lives itself, and its strength can be killed by those not aware."
- Anonymous*

Howard SCD Coloring and Poster Contests

The Howard SCD is offering a countywide coloring contest for students, kindergarten through grade 3 and a poster contest for students, grade 4 through 12. The contests are sponsored by Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) and National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD),

The coloring contest entries will be broken into classes as follows:

- Class A - Kindergarten and First Grade
- Class B - Second and Third Grades

The picture for the coloring contest, and the information page to be completed, can be found on our website (www.howardscd.org), Coloring must be done by the participating child ONLY. WAX CRAYONS are to be used - nothing else.

The poster contest entries will be broken into three classes according to grade level as follows:

- Class III - Fourth through Sixth Grades
- Class IV - Seventh through Ninth Grades
- Class V - Tenth through Twelfth Grades

The theme for the poster contest is **"Healthy Soils, Healthy Life"** For more information about the contest visit: www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/contests

The poster entries can be any size between 8 1/2" x 11" and 22" x 28". No commercial advertisements may appear on the poster.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the entries:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Conservation message (theme) | 50% |
| Visual effectiveness | 30% |
| Originality | 10% |
| Universal Appeal | 10% |

Please complete the provided NACD poster contest entry form (can be found at either of the previously mentioned websites) and attach to the back of the poster.

The entries will be judged at the Howard Soil Conservation District Board meeting in May. Prizes will be awarded to the first and second place winners from each school as well as the top three entries overall for each class / category. The winners will be notified by letter.

The first place winner from each class / category will then be submitted to the State contest. The entries for the State contest will be judged at the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) meeting in August.

Please return any and all entries by Wednesday, **May 18th** to the Howard Soil Conservation District at the following address:

14735 Frederick Road
Cooksville, MD 21723

If there are any questions please contact Kristal McCormick at 410.313.0680 or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov



HOWARD SCD 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Conservation Efforts

The conservation practices installed by farmers are part of the broader multi-state effort to restore the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. Each county in Maryland has a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) which tracks the nutrient reduction progress being made by the agricultural sector. Howard County farmers implemented a variety of best management practices this year to improve water quality:

| Best Management Practice | Amount |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Animal Trails & Walkways | 1836 sq.ft. |
| Critical Area Planting | 9.1 ac |
| Fence: Streamside | 2720 l.f. |
| Grassed Waterway | 2.8 ac |
| Heavy Use Area Protection | 0.1 ac |
| High Tunnel | 3922 sq.ft. |
| Lined Waterway or Outlet | 100 l.f. |
| Mulch | 6.5 ac |
| Obstruction Removal | 0.2 ac |
| Pasture & Hay Planting | 2.6 ac |
| Pipeline: Livestock | 2062 l.f. |
| Prescribed Grazing | 191.2 ac |
| Sediment Control Pond | 1 ea |
| Streambank & Shoreline Protection | 50 l.f. |
| Stream Crossing | 2 ea |
| Subsurface Drainage | 285 l.f. |
| Underground Outlet | 64 l.f. |
| Watering Facility | 1 ea |
| Water Well | 1 ea |

Below: Stream fencing installed using Patuxent Reservoir Cost-Share funds.



Cover Crops

Almost 4,200 acres of cover crops were planted in Howard County under MDA's Cover Crop Program. This does not include acres that farmers planted on their own, without cost-share.



Rye Cover Crop

Above: Planted aerially in late August. Photo in late October. Left: Planted using an incorporated method in early October. Photo in late November.



Erosion and Sediment Control

Reviewed 911 erosion and sediment control plans impacting 2,256 acres of land.

Federal, State and Local Funding allocated for Howard County Farmers through various programs administered by the District in

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS) | \$15,382.00 |
| MDA Cover Crop Program | \$251,874.00 |
| Federal Funding | \$251,709.00 |
| Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) | \$59,815.00 |
| Patuxent Reservoir Cost-Share | \$4,013.76 |
| Total 2021 Funding for Howard County Farmers | \$582,793.76 |

Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans

New Conservation Plans (26) 3823 acres

Revised Conservation Plans (5) 512.2 acres

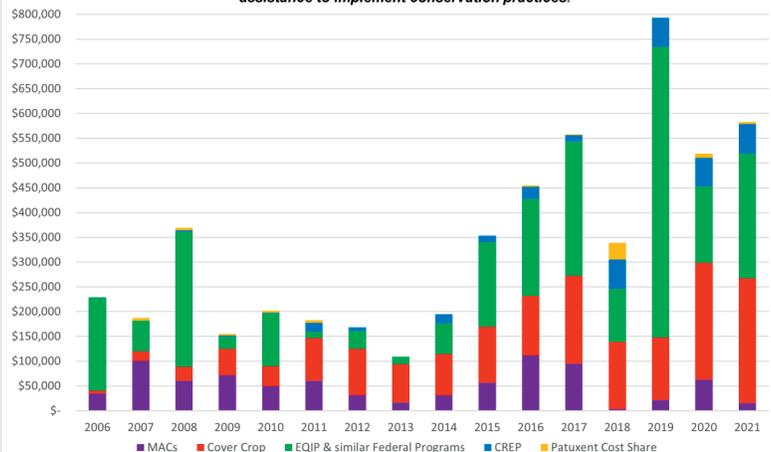


Top Left: Stream crossing using concrete panels.
Top Right: Pressure-fed watering trough installation.



CONSERVATION FUNDING for HOWARD COUNTY FARMERS

In addition to providing farmers with technical guidance to protect soil, water & other natural resources, the Howard SCD also helps farmers to access a wide array of financial assistance to implement conservation practices.



HOWARD SCD 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Urban Agriculture Initiative

The Urban Agriculture Initiative is a collaborative effort with Howard County Public Schools and the University of Maryland Extension - Master Gardeners Program to create vegetable gardens with Howard County Title I schools. The goals of the program are to teach students about where and how their food is grown, to give them a hands-on learning opportunity related to establishing and caring for vegetable gardens, and to create a resource (gardens) for the school and local community. Gardens were established at Cradlerock Elementary and Swansfield Elementary.



Left; John Dove, Howard SCD Supervisor and farmer, helps a second grader at Cradlerock Elementary plant seeds.

Below: Principal Jonathan Davis, Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball and Councilwoman Christiana Rigby celebrate an urban agriculture project for Earth Day with Cradlerock's second graders.



Left: Master Gardener Erica Jones, helps a student plant seeds.



Conservation Tour

Howard SCD, Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Howard County Farm Bureau once again partnered to create the 2021 Fall Farm and Conservation Tour. Please see the cover article for additional information.

Community Outreach

The HSCD was excited to be able to, once again, participate in community outreach efforts. Two of the biggest events that were back in 2021 were the Howard County Fair and Robinson Nature Center's Open House.

At both events we were able to help connect people with their watershed. We also had hands on activities for kids, with a take home craft kit for families not comfortable with participating in-person. At Fair we were also able to have live demonstrations comparing no-till soil and worked ground, showing the importance of soil microbes and the "soil glue" they make, helping create healthier soil.

Through these events we were able to interact with more than 200 people, answering questions, telling the history of Soil Conservation Districts and sharing our love of soil.

Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The 2021 Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting was held March 16th via Zoom. Topics included Grazing Management Strategies to Maximize Forage Quality and Yield; An Introduction to Soil Water Holding, Storage and Movement; Sulfur on Soybeans: Learning the When and Why; and Measuring and Managing Soil Acidity in the Mid-Atlantic. Our first virtual meeting was well attended with 42 participants. Attendees earned 2.5 CEUs for Maryland's Nutrient Management Certification.



Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation

We were finally able to celebrate our 75th anniversary this past year, our 76th year. The District was honored to be recognized, by so many, for their efforts over the years. Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate. We are looking forward to another 75 years of conservation.

Top Photo: County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball (left), and County Council members Deb Jung (third from right) and David Yungmann (far right) pictured with HSCD Board members, past and present, and staff.

Bottom Left Photo: County Council members Deb Jung (far left) and David Yungmann (far right) presenting HSCD Board members, past and present, with a citation of recognition for the District's hard work and dedication to the community.

Bottom Right: Cooperators Dinner invitation.



Melting Ice Safely

Each winter, people apply tons of ice-melting materials to sidewalks, driveways, and steps, often without regard to proper application procedures or to what the deicing substance contains. Careless use of deicing products can damage both the home and the environment:

- Overuse of some deicers can accelerate the freeze-and-thaw cycles that damage concrete, taking years off the life of a sidewalk or driveway.
- Some deicers corrode metal, causing damage to cars, and aluminum siding.
- Chemicals in many deicers can damage plants and shrubs near where the deicer is used if it is applied in large quantities.

To prevent damage to your home and the environment, choose a deicer carefully. Refer to Table 1 below for many of the ice-melting products currently found on the market, along with information concerning their effectiveness and safety.

How deicing affects the bay

The runoff carrying a deicing product from one small sidewalk may not cause much harm, but the combination of deicers used on all the sidewalks, roads, and parking lots in the region helps create harmful levels of salts and nutrients that enter storm drains and eventually empty into the Chesapeake Bay. You can reduce pollution of local streams and the Bay by selecting the proper materials and methods for removing ice and snow.

Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law prohibits the use of fertilizer to melt ice and snow - the nitrogen and phosphorus in fertilizer harm local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

| Product | Minimum Working Temp. (°F) | Speed | Damages Concrete and Metal? | Harms Plants? |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Magnesium Chloride | -13 | Very Fast | No | Moderately |
| Calcium Chloride | -22 | Fast | Yes* | Yes |
| Sodium Chloride (salt) | 18 | Moderate | Yes* | Yes |
| Potassium Chloride | 25 | Slow | OK on old concrete | Moderately |

Table 1. Ice-Melting Products

*Sodium and calcium chloride are particularly damaging to newly poured concrete. Also, these chemicals should not be applied to brick or stone surfaces. Table adapted with permission from work of John Buckreis, Merrifield Gardens Nursery, Annandale, VA

Any of the ice removers listed in the table can be used with minimal damage to steel, concrete, and plants if applied correctly.

- Ice melting products are most effective when spread thinly and evenly over the pavement prior to ice formation. It is much easier to prevent ice than to try to melt a thick layer of ice
- Follow the manufacturer's directions when applying a deicer. If possible, use even less than is recommended, but make sure the surface is covered thinly and evenly.
- To melt thick ice in very cold weather, add a small amount of water to the deicer to help initiate melting. To further aid melting and provide sure footing, mix the deicer with wet sand and/or ashes.

Buy deicers early in the season to ensure that you have an ample supply. Store the deicer and sand in separate heavy plastic garbage cans to keep them dry. If the sand becomes moist, mix a small amount of deicer with the sand to prevent freezing, or store the sand in a heated area.

Removing ice without deicer

There are several steps you can take to remove thin layers of ice on small areas such as the house steps:

- Apply warm water mixed with table salt, water conditioner salt, or the brine backwash from a water conditioner.
 - Use sand, ashes, or kitty litter to improve traction on icy areas.
 - Once a dry route to the house has been established, block off slippery areas to prevent personal injury.
- If an ice storm is predicted, cover small areas or steps with heavy plastic or other waterproof material.

This excerpt is from University of Maryland Extension's "Melting Ice Safely". For the complete article visit: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/melting-ice-safely>

Maryland Conservation Spotlight

Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has a new video series on their YouTube channel, **MdDeptAg**, that spotlights Maryland farmers who are making a difference for the state's natural resources and the Chesapeake Bay. The link to their most recent video is below ...

Maryland Conservation Spotlight - Manure Management

Waste storage structures come in all shapes and sizes. Meet two Frederick County livestock farmers who have installed these facilities to protect local streams, improve their operations and make daily chores easier.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH0HKxG0nDk>

MDA Nutrient Management 2021 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs)

Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) documenting nutrient applications for **Calendar Year 2021** were due to the Nutrient Management Program **March 1, 2022**. If you have not already submitted your AIR please continue reading for additional “how-to” information.

Farmers have two reporting options:

Farmers who want to submit their 2021 AIRs electronically should go to the Maryland OneStop Portal.

Farmers who want to submit paper reports may download either the standard AIR or the CAFO reporting form to their devices before completing.

The link to the Maryland OneStop Portal, reporting forms and instructions can be found at the following links:

OneStop Portal

<https://onestop.md.gov/forms/nutrient-management-annual-implementation-report-air-61c0aa180b323600012d37c9>

2021 AIR Form

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/2021_AIR_Fill_In_Form.pdf

2021 CAFO Form

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/2021_CAFO_Fill_In_Form.pdf

Instructions for Completing the 2021 AIR Form

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/2021_Form_Instructions.pdf

MDA 2021-2022 Cover Crop Program Update

Reminders concerning spring certification for the 2021-22 MDA Cover Crop Cost-Share Program ...

Termination may begin **March 1, 2022**. For those who requested the delayed termination incentive, these acres cannot be terminated prior to **May 1, 2022**.

Options for end of winter management include green chopping (for on-farm use only), plowing under, or killing by using a burn-down herbicide. Grazing of a cover crop does not qualify as an acceptable spring termination method.

Within two weeks of termination of the cover crop, but **no later than June 3, 2022**, you must certify to the SCD that the cover crop has been destroyed.

If you are interested in participating in the 2022-23 MDA Cover Crop Program look for information in mid-late spring. If you would like to be added to the HSCD's cover crop contact list please contact Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680 or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Sign-up

Howard County farmers and forest landowners interested in earning payments for actively managing and expanding conservation activities like multi-species cover crops, standing grain for wildlife, enhanced nutrient management, herbaceous weed control or pollinator habitat have until April 1 to be considered for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funding in fiscal year 2022.

Additional conservation activities available through CSP include soil health planning, building soil organic matter through crop rotations and practices that help producers adapt to or mitigate impacts of changing weather conditions. CSP also encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agri-

culture applications and new soil amendments to improve water quality.

Landowners should contact the NRCS office at 410.313.0680 to apply. Due to the pandemic, please call ahead to schedule a time to meet or discuss the program.

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to our office by April 1 to ensure their applications are considered for 2022 funding.

For more information about conservation planning and programs, contact our office or visit www.md.nrcs.usda.gov.

14735 Frederick Road
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21723

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CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

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John Dove, Vice-Chair
Nora Crist Treasurer
Chuck Schuster, Member
JG Warfield, Member
Ken Clements, Associate Member
Abby Gibbon, Associate Member

HSCD Staff

David C. Plummer, District Manager
Sam Engler, Acting District Conservationist
Nick Azat, RC&D Program Support Specialist
Merhlyn Barnes, Secretary
Alex Bratchie, Engineering Specialist
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Jackie Kern, Administrative Aide
Kristal McCormick, Engineering Specialist
Kristen Parris, Equine Conservation Planner
Dana Rushovich, Soil Conservationist
Geof Schoming, Engineering Specialist
John Vargo, Engineering Specialist

The Howard Soil Conservation District (HSCD) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.